

# MEXICO HAS VERY LOW WAGES BUT STRIKES ARE UNKNOWN.

General Clayton, Our Ambassador, Discusses Labor Conditions There.

## PRESIDENT DIAZ NOT RETIRE

What Americans Are Doing in Mexico—Mines Have Produced Billions in Gold and Silver.

By Frank G. Carpenter.  
(Special Correspondence of The Times-Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 23.—I met Gen. Powell Clayton, our ambassador to Mexico, when he was in Washington a short time ago. General Clayton is now seventy years of age, but he does not look sixty, and bears no signs of the wear and tear of public life. Still, he has been in the thick of things for more than half a century. He comes from a family of statesmen. The Claytons began to do things in the United States more than 150 years ago, and they have kept pretty well to the front ever since. Joshua Clayton came to America with William Penn. and John M. Clayton, the secretary of State, who made the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, was his grandson.

Powell Clayton comes from the same branch of the family. He was born in Pennsylvania, went to school at Wilmington, Del., and, like George Washington, started life as a civil engineer. Washington got \$5 a day for surveying the wilds of Virginia for Lord Fairfax. Powell Clayton got \$5 a mile for surveying public lands in Kansas in the days just preceding the war. It was his job as a surveyor that took him to the west. He was there when the war broke out. He joined the Union army and remained in the service until its close. He started in as a captain and came out a brigadier general.

After the war he bought a plantation in Arkansas, settled there and was elected Governor of the State. He led the reconstruction during the exciting period of reconstruction, when he fought a battle royal against the Ku Klux Klan. He was elected to the United States Senate from Arkansas and later that devoted himself to building the Eureka Springs railroad.

For the past seven years General Clayton has been ambassador from the United States to Mexico. He was appointed by President McKinley, and says that he will close his term at the end of the present administration. During our conversation I asked him how he liked the position of ambassador. He replied:

"The office is a pleasant one, although it carries many responsibilities and also the possibility of doing some good. I feel, however, that I have had it quite long enough, and I am ready to retire. It was my intention to have closed my public life at seventy, but I shall remain until the end of this administration and retire at seventy-two."

"What will you do then, General?" I asked.

"I don't know, but I suppose I will do what most old men do that is, lead a quiet life enjoying my friends. My children want me to write my memoirs for them. I have been saving material all my life, and it is possible I may do that."

Mexico in 1904.

"What is the condition of Mexico today, General?"

"It is in excellent condition. The people are prosperous and the country is on a good substantial basis. Times are good, although not so good, perhaps, as here."

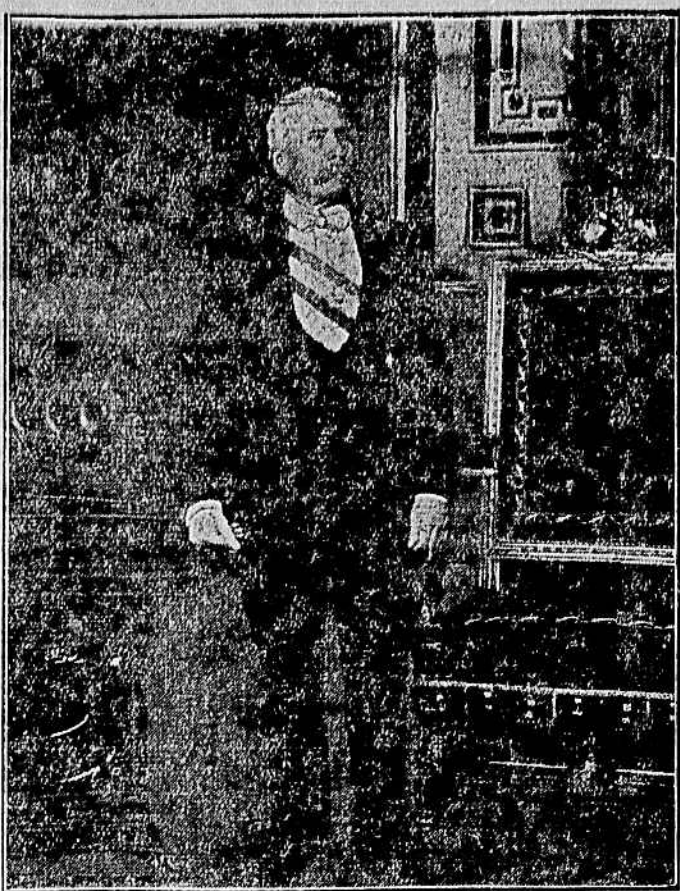
"Does the country grow much from year to year?"

"Mexico has a steady natural growth," replied Gen. Clayton. "A population is now about 14,000,000, and it is increasing at the rate of a million every five years. A great majority of the people are native Mexicans, including those descended from the Spanish and Indians. There is no such immigration from Europe as there is in the United States. The labor conditions there are different, and the people who come in have other things to sell than pure muscle. Many come to invest capital in mining or to engage in trade."

Peons Who Work for 25 Cents a Day.

"How about the labor conditions, Gen. Clayton? Do the capitalists have much trouble with organized labor?"

"Not at all," was the reply. "The



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only organized labor in Mexico is that employed on the different branches of the railroads. Such men belong to unions, but their organizations are usually branches of the trades unions of the United States. The chief labor of Mexico is made up of peons, the descendants of the native Indians. They are not like our Indians, being far more industrious and more quiet and easily handled. They do not know what the walking delegate is and yet strikes and lock-outs are comparatively unknown.

"Give me some idea of wages, General," said I.

"Wages are low," replied our ambassador to Mexico. "Twenty-five cents a day is paid for ordinary farm labor in most parts of the country, and in the factories the wages are proportionately small. The hours are long and on the farms the men work from sunrise to sunset, with a siesta at noon."

Chinese Cheap Labor.

"I see by a recent despatch that the Chinese are coming into Mexico by the thousands."

"Such statements are probably exaggerated," was the reply. "There are not many Chinese in Mexico, and they are admitted at only one or two ports in order that the character of those coming in may be carefully investigated."

"What are the Mormons doing in Mexico?"

"They have three colonies," replied the ambassador, two in the Bravos district of the state of Chihuahua, and one in the district of Arizpe in Sonora. There is also an American colony, not Mormon, in the State of Tamaulipas, which has been established within the past six months. All of these colonies are in a flourishing condition, and the Mormons especially are industrious and thrifty."

"About how many foreigners are there in Mexico?"

"Comparatively few. Less than one hundred thousand, I should say."

Americans in Mexico.

"Are there many Americans?"

"Yes, more than those of any foreign nationality excepting the Spaniards. There are fifteen or sixteen thousand of our people there. All, so far as I know, remain in Mexico, and most of them are engaged in making their fortunes and then return to the United States."

"What are the Americans doing?"

"They are interested in all sorts of enterprises. Some are opening up gold, silver and copper mines. Others have franchises for street railroads and water works in the cities. Some are engaged in farming and many employed in connection with the railroads, which belong largely to the United States."

"Have many made fortunes?"

"Some have done well, but none have made the enormous sums which are now

called fortunes in the United States. There is one man, Mr. Braniff, who is said to be worth about fifteen or sixteen millions in Mexican money. He built the Mexican National railroad, which runs from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, and has been interested in other enterprises of large size. General Frisbee is said to be worth one or two millions in Mexican money, but we have no other multi-millionaires that I know of."

"Is capital invested in Mexico safely?"

"I don't know what you mean by safe," said General Clayton. "If danger from revolution or from confiscation by the government is concerned, it is perfectly safe. It is just like property in the United States. One must investigate his locality. Mexico has a variety of soils, some very rich and some not worth a cent an acre."

Mexican Mines.

"How about the mines?"

"Mexico is very rich in minerals, but it has been mining for centuries. It is estimated that more than four billion dollars' worth of gold and silver have been taken out of the earth there. The mining has gone on steadily since the days of Cortez. Alexander Humboldt, who among his other scientific attainments had those of a mining engineer, said that there were three thousand mines in operation in Mexico when he went through the country about 100 years ago. The Mexicans are good miners. They know the value of their own product, and they are shrewd dealers. Americans going there should investigate carefully. If they do they may make their fortunes, for the country is undoubtedly rich."

"Is much American money going into Mexican mines?"

"Quite a good deal, I should say," replied General Clayton. "I asked: 'Into what kinds?' I asked: 'Gold, silver and copper.' 'Can you tell me something as to the extent of the mines?'"

"Yes, I have a list of the principal ones which was made last year. The country has altogether more than 15,000 mines which produce gold, silver and copper. There are 745 copper mines and some very large ones. There are other mines which produce copper and lead, and copper and iron. There are more than 1,000 gold mines, and almost 4,000 which produce both gold and silver. Altogether there are 6,500 mines which turn out more or less gold, either pure or in connection with other metals. There are more than 8,000 silver mines which

are producing, and the values of various kinds all told yield an output of about \$9,000,000 gold dollars per year."

Farms Fifty Miles Long.

"How about farming, General? I understand it pays well in Mexico."

"The most prolific farming there is stock raising," replied the ambassador. "There are enormous ranches in Mexico. Some are so large that you have to ride more than fifty miles to cross them. A few years ago I went down to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and took a trip through the cattle country there. I rode through one farm which had twenty-five thousand head upon it and through another which had over thirteen thousand. This was in February in the midst of our winter. The prairies were covered with grass which reached to my knees. The cattle industry is one of the great ones of Mexico. The total value of the ranches is more than half a billion gold dollars and the cattle are numbered by millions."

"Where are the chief markets for the stock?" I asked.

"The United States takes most of the surplus from northern Mexico," said ambassador Clayton. "The cattle are taken across the border and fattened in Texas or the territories, and thence shipped to the great packing centers. In the south the chief markets are Cuba and South America."

"What is Mexico doing in manufacturing?" I asked.

"It is increasing its cotton factories," replied the ambassador. "It has now considerably over a hundred factories, which use something like sixty million pounds of raw cotton a year. The factories make different kinds of goods, including pieces of cloth last year, chiefly for home consumption. The industry is protected by a high tariff."

President Diaz.

"Tell me something about President Diaz, Gen. Clayton," said I. "What kind of a man is he?"

"He is one of the ablest executives of his time," was the reply. "He has been president of Mexico for about a quarter of a century, and the prosperity of the country is largely due to him."

"Where does he come from, General?"

"He is a native Mexican," replied Gen. Clayton. "He was born in Oaxaca, which is about a day's ride by train below Mexico City, and he is old enough now to have served in the Mexican army during the Mexican war. He was, however, not much more than a boy at that time. Shortly after the war was over he left the army to study law, but he entered it again from time to time, taking part in several of the civil commotions which preceded his own election as president. He became president in 1878 and then began to bring order out of chaos. Since then Mexico has been quiet, and Gen. Diaz has managed its affairs so well that, with the exception of one interregnum, he has held the office of president from that time to this."

"I see it stated that he is about to re-

volutions has passed, as far as Mexico is concerned. The people have had the blessings of peace for almost a generation, and they would not submit to a change of that kind. Besides, the revolutionary element has died off in the interim, and a substantial business element of conservative people has taken its place."

"As an evidence of my faith in the stability of Mexico I have been investing in government bonds. They pay a little more than similar securities in the United States, and I regard them as equally

safe."

President Roosevelt and the Panama Canal.

The conversation here turned to political matters, and I asked Gen. Clayton if he thought President Roosevelt would be nominated.

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"President Roosevelt has made a won-

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## Thalhimer's. Gigantic Sale of Smart Shirt-Waist Suits.

600 at Less Than Half of Original Prices.

We purchased from the manufacturers of the celebrated "Royal" Shirt-Waist Suits, 50 dozen suits made of white linen, white lawns, embroidery trimmed, white madras, white dimity, linen chambrays, figured madras, grass linens, etc., which were discarded on account of machine oil, water spots and flaws in material.

The public has repeatedly received overwhelming proof of our ability to satisfy the most varied popular demands as regards quality of material, attractiveness, reliability of make and fairness of price, but never any more thoroughly convincing than that furnished by the present display and sale of Shirt-Waist Suits.

Lot 1	Lot 2	Lot 3	Lot 4
are Suits that sold from \$5 to \$10, which we have marked at, choice... \$2.50	are real \$6.48 and \$7.48 Suits, and are marked at, choice... \$3.98	were pretty styles that sold at \$8.48 and \$9.98, and are now, choice... \$4.98	consists of Suits that were good \$10.00, \$12.00 and \$15.00 values, and are marked, choice... \$6.48

## Our Wash Fabrics.

They Are Being Talked About—

They Are Self-Advertising Goods.

To see them means admiration—and recommendation. To know the prices means a further interest in them.

A beautiful assortment it is—rich and varied beyond precedent. Artists and manufacturers in this industry are progressive, and we insist on having the best. New lines are received almost daily, so there is always something new to interest the most constant visitor.

Pongee Shirt-Waist Suitings, 39c.

On this class of goods we are headquarters, carrying the largest stock with greater variety, in all the plain and fancy weaves, the leading novelty for spring and summer wear.

Silk Gingham for Waists and Suits, 25c.

Of these goods we also carry a large stock in both plain and fancy effects.

Plain and Embroidered Silk Waists, 162c and 25c. Every color and shade and white and cream, for street and evening wear.

## The Finishing Detail—A Parasol.

Next to the fan, the Parasol is probably the most expressive item in the costume of a correctly gowned woman. It is almost a sure index to her taste and color sense, but it need not necessarily be a correct index to the boundaries of her pocket-book. And that brings us to a rather important thing in connection with our stock of Parasols this season.

The expenditure of a modest sum will procure you a Parasol either to match your costume or not, that will give you the satisfaction of knowing it is correct and beautiful.

The Coaching Parasol takes precedence, but the 24- and 35-inch Umbrella in silk is more in demand as a sunshade this season than ever before. An exclusive idea is a Parasol in the champagne color in the coaching style, either with plain or hemstitched border.

## Laces and Insertions

In the new net top effect are here in great profusion; the white, butter and Arab shades, also new Venise Insertions and Galleons—all widths and qualities, and the new allovers in the net effects; also Venise, at \$1.00, \$1.50, \$2.50, \$3.00, \$4.00 and \$5.00.

New Platt Valenciennes, Edges, Insertions and Allovers, destined to be one of the most popular sorts this season. Also narrow, dainty little Valenciennes Edges and Insertions, at, per dozen yards, 25c., 35c., 50c., 65c., 75c., 85c. and \$1.00.

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